

ND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION BEST PRACTICES**February 2001****GUIDELINES for
MAINTENANCE -- TRANSPORTATION/VEHICLE REPAIR -- TRAINING**

The following Best Practice Guidelines were created as a result of discussions and recommendations made by Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Administrators throughout North Dakota. The discussions were precipitated by a desire to increase consistency and efficiency across the State, while at the same time assisting our clients to achieve their individual employment goals.

These guidelines are regarded as integral to the Vocational and Career Counseling provided by our Qualified Rehabilitation Professionals, and will be useful as discussion points to consider throughout the VR process.

These are guidelines only and are not to be construed as policy, regulation, or law unless so indicated.

MAINTENANCE

*Federal Regulations at 34 CFR 361 define **Maintenance** as: ". . .monetary support provided to an individual for expenses such as food, shelter, and clothing that are in excess of the normal expenses of the individual and that are necessitated by the individual's participation in an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs or the individual's receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under an IPE."*

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ND Note: VR is an employment program, not a subsistence or welfare program. Maintenance is a support service which is offered only in conjunction with another service on the IPE. The other service does not necessarily have to be funded by VR.

AREAS TO DISCUSS PRIOR TO PROVIDING MAINTENANCE***Service Code: 16401***

- Is the cost over and above normal expenses?
- Is the increased cost due to the client's participation in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)?
- Is the client actively working toward his employment goal?
- What other resources are available, such as church, Salvation Army, Community Action Programs, etc.?
(A list of resources is available on the VR Discussion Database.)
- Is this a deposit due to relocation for training or employment? (Basic utilities only)
- Are two households necessary due to the client's participation in the IPE?
- Have you reviewed the client's budget?

CONDITIONS WHERE VR WOULD NOT PROVIDE MAINTENANCE

- The client is not actively working on her employment plan
- The client is not receiving another service
- The cost is not over and above the client's normal expenses
- The increased cost is not a result of the IPE
- Other resources are available (comparable benefits)
- The client is not living within a realistic budget. (His expenses exceed his ability to pay.)

HOW LONG WOULD VR PROVIDE MAINTENANCE?

- Recommend a review by the counselor after 3 months

HOW MUCH SHOULD VR PAY FOR MAINTENANCE?

- Use Housing Authority guidelines as a guide to usual and customary housing costs for your region. *(County Housing Authorities have the local guidelines for their area.)*
- If over \$500 - or any other amount determined by the regional VR Administrator - have a peer review.

TRANSPORTATION & MOTOR VEHICLE REPAIR

*Federal Regulations at 34 CFR 361 define **Transportation** as: "... travel and related expenses that are necessary to enable an applicant or eligible individual to participate in a vocational rehabilitation service, including expenses for training in the use of public transportation vehicles & systems."*

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AREAS TO DISCUSS PRIOR TO PROVIDING *TRANSPORTATION*

Service Code: 16528

- Is it related to a VR service and necessary to achieve the client's employment goals?
- What other resources are available to pay for the transportation?

CONDITIONS WHERE VR WOULD NOT PROVIDE *TRANSPORTATION*

- When other resources are available (comparable benefits).
- When it is not related to a VR service or necessary to achieving the client's employment goals.

HOW LONG WOULD VR PROVIDE *TRANSPORTATION*?

- For as long as necessary in order to complete the service(s) in the IPE
- Up to the second paycheck when the client needs assistance due to a job

HOW MUCH SHOULD VR PAY FOR *TRANSPORTATION*?

- Always negotiate most cost effective price/method, not to exceed the state rate (.25/mile as of 01/01/01)

AREAS TO DISCUSS PRIOR TO PROVIDING *MOTOR VEHICLE REPAIR*
Service Code: 16493

- Is it needed so the client can: a) participate in her plan, b) achieve her goal, c) attend training, d) get to work?
- Are there other methods of transportation available, such as bicycle, bus, co-worker, family member, etc.?
- What other resources are available to help pay for the repair?
- Is the cost more than the value of a car?
--Consider the book value as well as the value to the client
- Is this repair or maintenance?
-- Routine vehicle maintenance such as oil changes, tune-ups, tires & belts are typically considered the responsibility of the client.
- Do we have proof of driver's license/insurance/ownership/registration?
- Is it a reputable repair person? (Preferably licensed)
- What can the client pay?
- Have we received and reviewed the estimates?

CONDITIONS WHERE VR WOULD NOT PROVIDE FOR *VEHICLE REPAIR*

- When the repair is not work-related or part of participating in the IPE
- When alternate transportation is available
- When comparable services (other resources) are available
- If there is no evidence of a driver's license, insurance and registration
- If the cost exceeds the book value and the value to the client
- Under most conditions, if it is routine maintenance such as an oil change, tune up, tires or belts. These would typically be considered the responsibility of the client.
- If no estimates are available.

HOW LONG WOULD VR PROVIDE *VEHICLE REPAIR*?

N/A

HOW MUCH SHOULD VR PAY FOR *VEHICLE REPAIR*?

- Use written estimates/bids provided by the clients. (All bid requirements fall under NDVR's policy on client purchases.)
- The guideline is up to \$750 total. If the estimate or "life-time total is more than \$750, review with the regional VR administrator

TRAINING

Assisting clients to identify an employment goal that is the right one for them, is one of the most important elements of vocational counseling. The right job is the job that is available in the labor market, pays a salary that allows for independence and is consistent with the client's interests, goals, abilities, and capabilities. The right job could be one a client could enter tomorrow with on-the-job training, or eight months from now through an apprenticeship program, or two years from now after technical school or 4 years from now after graduating from college.

VR counselors are key in facilitating the discussions that will help clients think through this critical decision.

AREAS TO DISCUSS PRIOR TO PROVIDING TRAINING

- Through vocational & career counseling look at:
 - How can we get the client back to work the fastest (transferable skills)
 - On-the-job-training
 - Two year training
 - Four year training
- Is the training appropriate (realistic & attainable) in terms of his skills, abilities, capabilities and interests?
 - For example, is it consistent with the results of vocational assessments, interest inventory, "Choices", labor market information.
- Is this an informed decision/choice? Does the client have information from her research on what is required to enter this field?
 - job requirements --job availability
 - salary --training requirements-how long, how much. . .
 - requirements for licensure, certification or other credentials
 - does it lead to independence?
- Will he be employable in the job he identifies?
- Will the training prepare her for the job she has identified?
- Are there jobs available in this field?
- Is the client willing to relocate if necessary?

- Does the client have a “**Plan for Graduation/Completion**”? The plan should include:
 - What courses she is required to take
 - During which semester or quarter she will be taking them
 - How long it will take to complete the field of study (i.e. 16 credit hours per semester - not 12 - in order to graduate in 4 years.)
- Has the client applied for grants & scholarships?
- [If in training] Do transcripts show the client is making progress?

CONDITIONS WHERE VR WOULD NOT PROVIDE TRAINING

- If her transferable skills allow her to be readily employed
- When abilities don't match the identified goal (goal is unrealistic based on assessment)
- If jobs are not available in the identified field
- If the client is not following his IPE such as:
 - not taking advantage of accommodations and other supports identified in the plan;
 - a lapse in his treatment program
- When the grade point average falls below 2.0, or falls below the grade point average specified for his field of study.
- If there is unsatisfactory academic performance -- not meeting the minimum standards for the program
- If we don't receive a copy of the transcript
- If there is a pattern of incompletes and withdrawals
- If the client will not apply for grants or scholarships

HOW LONG WOULD VR PROVIDE TRAINING?

- For four year degree - 10 to 12 semesters
- For a two year program - 5 to 6 semester

PARTICIPATION IN GRADUATE SCHOOL COSTS

- If it is an appropriate (realistic & attainable) goal in terms of the client's skills, abilities, capabilities and interests.
 - If the client cannot become employed without a Masters Degree
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PARTICIPATION IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

- This includes short-term training & apprenticeships that are not part of the higher ed and financial aid system such as: carpet laying, truck driving, massage therapy, plumbing, carpentry, masonry, etc.
 - Vocational training is exempt from North Dakota's financial needs test. However, VR will explore comparable benefits and, as with all services, clients are encouraged to participate to the extent possible and feasible.
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